

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

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OPINION | REVIEW & OUTLOOK

Cuomo's Cold Weather Tax

His natural-gas blockade is raising costs across the Northeast.

By The Editorial Board

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New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo at the state Capitol, Jan. 29. PHOTO: HANS PENNINK/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Last week's polar vortex brought another chilling reminder about the economic damage of New York Governor Andrew Cuomo's shale-drilling

blockade. His energy policies are hurting upstate and leaving New York City's suburbs out in the cold.

Soon after winning a second term in 2014, Mr. Cuomo banned hydraulic fracturing in the state's southern tier that lies atop the rich Marcellus Shale deposit. Upstate New Yorkers lost out on fracking's enormous economic benefits while neighboring Pennsylvania reaped thousands of jobs as well as increased government revenue and landowner royalties.

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Then in 2016 Mr. Cuomo blocked a 124-mile pipeline to deliver natural gas from Pennsylvania to New York and New England. The pipeline would have allowed millions in the region to convert to natural gas from dirtier and more expensive heating oil, which would save an upstate New Yorker about \$1,000 a year.

Due to Mr. Cuomo's natural-gas blockade, New England during the winter must import liquefied natural gas from Trinidad and Tobago, which is far more expensive and emits more carbon than shipping via pipeline. (The 1920 Jones Act precludes fuel imports from the Gulf Coast, but that's another editorial). Power plants that typically run on natural gas must also switch to oil during cold snaps due to high demand for and inadequate supply of natural gas.

Now New York's more affluent are feeling the frost too. Last week the utility Consolidated Edison announced a moratorium on natural-gas hook-ups in New York City's Westchester suburb due to pipeline constraints. "You have a lot of natural gas around the country, but getting it to New York has been the strain," said utility spokesman Mike Clendenin. Developers

are warning that they will have to put projects on ice until natural-gas constraints are eased.

Green groups say that building more pipelines would impede development of renewables like solar and wind. Despite declining costs, wind and solar are still usually more expensive than fossil fuels and don't provide reliable energy. Do environmentalists expect people to heat their homes with windmills?

Mr. Cuomo imposed his fossil-fuel embargo while laying the groundwork for a presidential campaign, though last year he supposedly ruled out running. Perhaps he was worried the harm from his economic policies would be revealed.

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